

Message Text

SECRET

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: LE, IS, SY

SUBJECT: ATHERTON TALKS IN SAUDI ARABIA AND JORDAN ON
LEBANON

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REF: KUWAIT 04558

1. FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES ATHERTON TALKS WITH SAUDIS AND JORDANIANS ON LEBANON.
2. ATHERTON DISCUSSED LEBANON WITH THE SAUDIS AND WITH

HUSSEIN ONLY IN A GENERAL WAY, EXPRESSING OUR CONCERN OVER THE SITUATION THERE. ATHERTON SAID WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN PROVOCATIONS BY CHRISTIAN EXTREMISTS BUT FELT THAT SYRIA'S RESPONSE HAS BEEN DISPROPORTIONATE. HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE IS A PERCEPTION IN ISRAEL, WHICH WE DO NOT NECESSARILY SHARE, BUT WHICH IS A POLITICAL REALITY WE MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT, THAT THE SYRIANS ARE OUT TO DESTROY THE CHRISTIANS AND SAID OUR CONCERN IS THAT THE ESCALATION OF MILITARY ACTIONS COULD NOT ONLY MAKE OUR PEACE EFFORTS MORE DIFFICULT BUT DESTROY PROSPECTS FOR CAMP DAVID AND PEACE HOPES ALTOGETHER. DANGER WAS THAT EXTREMISTS WILL CONTINUE THEIR PROVOCATIONS AND SYRIANS WILL CONTINUE TO REACT, AND THINGS MAY GET OUT OF HAND. ATHERTON ASKED WHETHER SOME WAY COULD BE FOUND TO

DISENGAGE THE TWO SIDES, BUT MADE CLEAR THAT HE WAS NOT TALKING ABOUT WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN TROOPS FROM LEBANON BUT ONLY DISENGAGEMENT ON THE FIRING LINE. ATHERTON STRESSED, HOWEVER, TO BOTH SAUDIS AND JORDANIANS THAT HE WAS NOT MAKING PROPOSALS BUT SIMPLY SHARING OUR CONCERN OVER THE SITUATION.

3. AT NO TIME WAS THE QUESTION OF SAUDI ARABIA'S OR OTHER ADF CONTRIBUTOR STATES INCREASING THEIR FORCES IN LEBANON MENTIONED IN ATHERTON'S TALKS IN SAUDI ARABIA, OR JORDAN, ALTHOUGH ATHERTON DID NOTE SAUDIS HAVE PLAYED A VERY POSI-
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TIVE ROLE IN LEBANON.

CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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